

# The Case of many Protestants in the County of Cambridge, humbly tendred to the Consideration of the present PARLIAMENT.

**I**T would be tedious to enumerate the Names and Particulars of the Sufferings of Protestants in this County, from a severe Execution of the Laws expressly made in the Reigns of Queen Elizabeth and King James, against Papists; and because we intend with all Modesty to represent our own Case, we shall not take notice what favour the Papists (who indeed are but few) have found amongst us, nor should we rejoyce in their Prosecution, but we must say, the Burden lyes heavy upon us, that do in our Souls detest Popish Idolatries.

Many of us have been long proceeded against, and Returned into the Exchequer as Popish Recusants; and there are about Fifty Free-holders, as such, made Tenants to his Majesty, and the two Thirds of their Revenue levied upon them in such a manner, that it were better for them to hold their Lands of a Neighbour Gentleman at a Rack-rent; and even beyond the Extent of the Law the Copy-hold Lands of some are seized,

We have given all possible demonstration in our spheres of our Abhorrence of Popery, and of our Sense of the Danger threatning his Majesty and the Protestant Religion from the Hellish Popish Plot, and yet since the most happy Discovery thereof, we have found a more rigorous Execution of these Laws than in all the time of his Majesties Reign: For since the Elections to this Parliament, we have had at least One hundred and fifty Protestants convicted as Recusants, and some are now Prisoners upon those Laws, and all prosecuted in the Exchequer.

Mr. Francis Holcroft a Nonconformist Minister, being met alone upon the Road in June last, by Thomas Duckett Esq; a Captain in the Militia, was taken Prisoner by him about seven miles from Cambridge, and committed to the common Gaole by a Warrant of something an unusual nature from the Captain and his Lievtenant.

It was Enacted in the 35 of Queen Elizabeth, That if any person shall forbear for the space of a Month to hear Divine Service, and shall be present at a Conventicle, and be thereof Convicted, he shall be committed to Prison, there to remain till he Conforms and makes the Declaration and Submission in that Act directed: And that upon refusal he shall Abjure the Realm, and if he shall not depart, or abjuring shall retutn, he shall dye as a Felon without Benefit of Clergy.

Some not being contented to keep Mr. Holcroft Prisoner, are putting this Law in Execution upon him, an Accompt whereof follows.

At the General Quarter Sessions of the Peace the 7<sup>th</sup> of October, 1680.

before Sir Thomas Hatton, Sir Levinus Bennet, Sir Robert Cotton, Dr. Cooke ( who had the Chair ) Dr. Stoite, &c. he was Indicted as follows.

Cambridge-shire ss. **T**He Jurors for our Sovereign Lord the King, upon their Oath do present, that Francis Holcroft late of Chesterton in the aforesaid County, Gentleman, the 1<sup>st</sup> of September in the 28. Year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord the King that now is, being of the Age of sixteen Tears and more, at Chesterton aforesaid, in the County aforesaid, did obstinately refuse to repair to any Church, Chappel or usual place of Common-Prayer to hear Divine Service now establisht by the Laws and Statutes of the Realm, and did forbear to hear Divine Service as aforesaid from the said first day of September in the 28. Year of the King by the space of one Month thence ensuing, and that the said Francis afterward, that is to say, the 30<sup>th</sup> day of March in the 29<sup>th</sup> Year of the said Kings Majesties Reign, at Chesterton aforesaid in the County aforesaid, in the Mansion-house of one Robert Stainmore in Chesterton aforesaid, was of himself voluntarily present at an unlawful Assembly Conventicle and Meeting of divers persons to the Jurors unknown, and in the said house then and there gathered under colour and pretence of the exercise of Religion against the Laws and Statutes of the Realm of England, against the Peace of the Kings Majesty his Crown and Dignity, and against the form of the Statute in such case made and provided.

It is a notorious part of the Popish Plot, to have Protestant Dissenters esteemed Papists, which Plot hath indeed been in the World as long as Christianity it self; but we are infallibly assured of a discrimination, for

Mat. 10. 25, 26. It is enough for the Disciple that he be as his Master, and the Servant as his Lord; if they have call'd the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of the household; fear them not therefore, for there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, and hid that shall not be known.